

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

ANIMAL TRAILS AND WALKWAYS

(feet)
CODE 575

DEFINITION

Established lanes or travel ways that facilitate animal movement.

Trails or walkways shall be constructed in such a manner that accelerated erosion will not occur. Where necessary, diversions with a stable outlet will be provided.

PURPOSES

- Provide or improve access to forage, water, working/handling facilities, and/or shelter,
- Improve grazing efficiency and distribution, and/or
- Protect ecologically sensitive, erosive and/or potentially erosive sites.

Sensitivity of the animal's feet, with respect to the intended purpose of the trail or walkway, will be included as a design parameter in selecting the surface material for trails or walkways.

Trails or walkways seeded or planted to vegetative cover will be protected from grazing until the vegetation is fully established and capable of withstanding grazing and/or trampling. Vegetative cover shall be established in accordance with Critical Area Planting, Code 342. Where maintaining vegetative cover is necessary but not possible, Heavy Use Area Protection, Code 561 will be used to provide adequate surface protection.

CONDITIONS WHERE THIS PRACTICE APPLIES

On lands where control of animal movement is needed to facilitate access, improve grazing, prevent erosion, and/or protect ecologically sensitive areas.

Conservation practice standard 382, Fence, will be used when needed to keep animals confined to the trail or walkway until the desired destination is reached.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

All planned work shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws and permit conditions and requirements. The landowner shall obtain all necessary permits prior to construction or any land clearing activities.

Animal trails or walkways shall be constructed wide enough to accommodate movement of animals and access by operator for management and maintenance.

Additional Criteria Applicable to Providing or Improving Access to Forage, Water, Working/Handling Facilities and/or Shelter

Trails and walkways will be designed and constructed of sufficient size to accommodate the expected frequency of use and animal type(s) planned for the operation.

When needed to facilitate movement of animals through a series of paddocks or

pastures, gate openings and lane layouts shall allow for efficient flow of animals with the least amount of stress.

Additional Criteria Applicable to Improving Grazing Efficiency and Distribution

Fenced or unfenced animal trails or walkways will be used to distribute grazing to overcome terrain features causing uneven grazing distribution and pressure.

Additional Criteria Applicable to Protection of Ecologically Sensitive Areas.

Cultural resources, threatened or endangered species, wetlands, streambanks, floodways or other ecologically sensitive areas, and areas of special scenic value will be protected through the proper design of trail(s) or walkway(s).

CONSIDERATIONS

Conservation Practice Standard 528A, Prescribed Grazing, can be used to further improve grazing distribution and pressure.

Other conservation practices, such as Use Exclusion, Code 472 can be used in conjunction with trails or walkways to minimize the impact on sensitive areas.

For areas of high livestock concentration, such as around ponds, tanks, troughs, or other feeding areas, use Heavy Use Area Protection, Code 561.

For travelways used by vehicles or equipment for purposes other than management and maintenance of animal trails or walkways, use Access Road, Code 560.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications for constructing access roads shall be in keeping with this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended purpose.

Plans (design drawings) for should specify the following:

- a. lengths,*
- b. width,*
- c. location*
- d. material specifications*
- e. cuts or fills should be defined with sufficient grades and elevations.*

All material requirements will be shown on the plans. If vegetation is included, the plans shall specify species, recommended planting method and fertilizer requirements.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The Operation and Maintenance Guide for Animal Trails and Walkways shall be provided to and reviewed with the landowner.